Prophet ™& ©1993 Rob Liefeld, ARR.

COMIC SHOP NEWS

9 • 29 • 93

Prophet and Loss

Prophet is a man created in the past to battle evil in the future. Unfortunately, he finds himself awakened in our present, where he must uncover the truth behind his mysterious creation—and face the wrath of his old enemy, Judas, who has also been resurrected in our time. If that's not enough, there's also Bloodstrike, who's targeted Prophet and Kirby as an enemy that must be stopped at all costs.

Prophet, a new ***Youngblood*** spinoff series by Rob Liefeld and Dan Panosian, reunites Prophet and Kirby as they attempt to re-establish contact with the Direct Orbital Command Center—and to escape the reach of the U.S. military, which they have infiltrated to complete their mission. They also have other enemies they don't know about: mysterious forces within the government who have initiated an ominous action known as the Disciple Directive. And then there's Judas, who has very personal reasons to want revenge on Prophet...

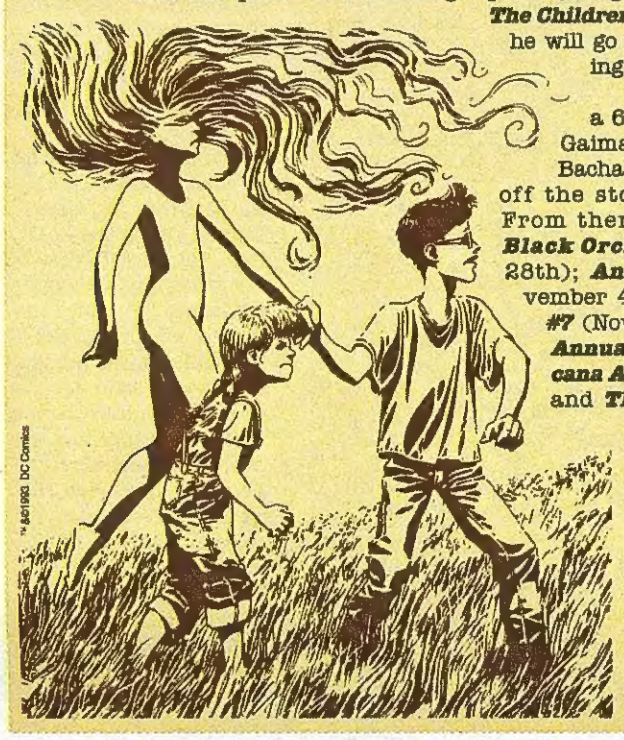
Prophet #1, an early October release, is priced at $2.50; it will include a special coupon redeemable for a copy of the upcoming ***Prophet #0.*** Subsequent issues of ***Prophet*** are priced at $1.95.

by WAYNE LEE

They're Not Kidding Around In The Children's Crusade

DC's Vertigo line has proven very popular to its sophisticated, mature audience—but children become the focus of the upcoming Vertigo project known as ***The Children's Crusade.*** We're not talking about children as readers, mind you, but children as focal characters in a seven-part storyline that introduces a mysterious realm known as Free Country... and seven children who hold in their collective hands the power to save both the Free Country and our world.

Free Country is described by DC's Patricia Jeres as "a haven for abused and unwanted children. But the denizens of that far place are making mysterious plans, plans that will hinge on the recruitment of several young beings of power." These seven powerful children include rowland and Paine, the two dead boy-detectives who first appeared in ***Sandman #25***; Suzy, the Black Orchid's child; Maxine Baker, Buddy (Animal Man) Baker's daughter; Tefé Holland, the child of the Swamp Thing; Dorothy Spinner of the Doom Patrol; and Tim Hunter, the young boy who played a pivotal role in the ***Books of Magic*** series. Hunter is a particularly important part of the story; he will star in one of the five annuals that comprise (along with the bookend-specials) ***The Children's Crusade,*** and from there he will go on to star in his own ongoing title in early 1994.

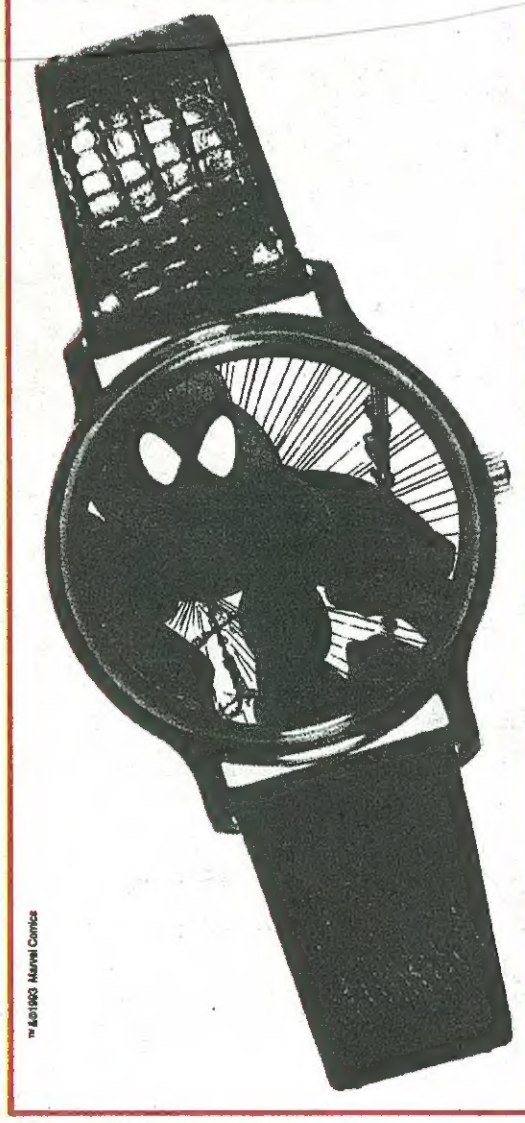


The Children's Crusade #1, a 64-page book written by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Chris Bachalo and Mike Barreiro, kicks off the storyline on October 21st. From there, the action flows into ***Black Orchid Annual #1*** (October 28th); ***Animal Man Annual #1*** (November 4th); ***Swamp Thing Annual #7*** (November 11th); ***Doom Patrol Annual #2*** (November 18th); ***Arcana Annual #1*** (November 25th); and ***The Children's Crusade #2,*** written by Neil Gaiman and Alicia Kwitney and illustrated by Peter Snejbjerg. The annuals are written and illustrated by creators associated with the respective monthly titles. Each 64-page book is priced at $3.95.

by KIM B. PEARSON

Forget the Infinity Watch—Here's the Spidey Watch!

If you've always wanted to be able to tell time and show your comic book allegiance at the same time, Marvel has just the item for you. The ***1993 Marvel Spider-Man Watch*** is the first in a series of high-quality collectible watches produced by Marvel (previous Marvel watches have been licensed products; Marvel's only in-house watch was the Captain America watch produced in conjunction with the Fabian Nicieza-Kevin Maguire ***Captain America*** limited series a couple of years ago). This watch, which is limited to 5000 units, each etched with number, date, and Marvel logo on the back of the watch, features an original Spidey design by ***Amazing Spider-Man*** illustrators *Mark Bagley* and *Randy Emberlin*. Of course, an attractive watch is pretty useless unless the insides are good quality—which is why Marvel is utilizing the same Japanese watch movements as are used in Seiko and Citizen watches. The price on these watches begins at $59.95— but with only 5000 watches slated for production, don't be surprised if prices go up once the run sells out. If you're interested, let the friendly folks at your local comic shop know pronto... while there's still time...



From Your Friendly Neighborhood Comics Outlet

Printed on 100% Recycled Newsprint

Back In the Saddle Again

Fans who had begun to think that they had to be immortal in order to see the completion of the comic series based on *Piers Anthony*'s ***Incarnations of Immortality*** novels will be pleased to hear that, at long last, ***On a Pale Horse*** is back on the Innovation schedule. ***On A Pale Horse #4,*** scheduled for mid-October release, is a 48-page $4.95 prestige-format book adapted by *Scott Rockwell* and illustrated by *Vagner Vargas*.

Keep Watching The SkyCaps

Genesis, the Malibu crossover series that will bring ***Dinosaurs For Hire, Ex-Mutants,*** and ***The Protectors*** into a single universe, is already catching the interest of fans who are eager to see just how these three very diverse series will interrelate. Malibu and SkyBox have joined forces to make the six-book series even more attractive, however: Malibu will by polybagging each of the books along with an exclusive Genesis SkyCap. The SkyCaps will include Shannon from Ex-Mutants, Reese from Dinosaurs For Hire, and WidowMaker, Gravestone, Ferret, and Man of War from Protectors.

"We have no doubt that the SkyCaps will attract more people to Genesis," *Alan Jay Payne* of Malibu said. "They're the coolest collectibles around. And Genesis will attract more people to Malibu Comics, the coolest publisher around." If the polybags and the SkyCaps aren't enough to call your attention to the six installments of this storyline when it begins in September, Malibu is also numbering each book with a Genesis number as well as its own issue number. Look for the action to begin in ***Ex-Mutants #11***.

Truer Crime

Last year, Eclipse stirred up a hornet's nest of controversy with its initial series of ***True Crime Trading Cards***, profiling both criminals and lawmen from 20th Century American history. This fall, the Federal Card Company and SkyBox will update the concept of crime cards with a new series that goes one step further: it depicts criminals who are still on the loose—criminals who are taken from the FBI's Most Wanted List.

Wanted By FBI Trading Cards, designed to resemble the wanted notices almost all of us have browsed through at the post office, features eighty different wanted criminals in its first hundred-card set. The remaining twenty cards will highlight the functions and expertise of the FBI through four subsets: the Top Ten, FBI Lab, FBI Firearms, and FBI Facts and History. Federal and SkyBox will supplement the set with special chase cards, including a foil-stamped J. Edgar Hoover card, a die-cut FBI target card, and a redemption card good for a counterterrorism trading card set.

Five percent of the profits from the ***Wanted By FBI Trading Cards*** will be donated to victims of violent crime as well as to crime and drug prevention programs; a special on-pack offer will also allow collectors to enter a drawing to win a grand price to Washington, DC, to tour the FBI Headquarters. ***Wanted by FBI Trading Cards,*** priced at $1.25 per pack, are scheduled for October release.

Reunions.. Pleasant and Un-...

Chris Powell, a.k.a. Darkhawk, has a pair of reunions coming up this fall. One of them is certainly good news: Chris learns that his father isn't dead after all, but is instead alive and well in San Francisco. The other reunion, though, isn't so good: Venom is back, and Darkhawk crosses paths with him when he tries to hook up with his father. The last time these two met, it wasn't such a good time for Darkhawk; if you want to see how Chris fares this time around, you'll have to drop by your local comic shop on November 4th, when ***Darkhawk #35*** is scheduled for release. ***Darkhawk #35*** is written by *Danny Fingeroth* and illustrated by *Tod Smith* and *Ian Akin*.

Fangs For the Explanation...

So if ***Necroscope Book II,*** the upcoming limited series from Malibu, is about vampires, why is the subtitle of the series ***Wamphyri?*** It's not a typo, folks—in fact, there's a very good explanation for the change. We're not going to tell you what that explanation is, mind you—but *Brian Lumley*, the author of ***Necroscope Book II: Wamphyri,*** will explain it himself in a 250-word introduction included in the first issue of the comic. According to *Penny Arévalo* of Malibu, "Lumley fans may recall that the novel, the second in a trilogy, is titled ***Vamphyri!*** But that was just a typo. Lumley insists that it is Wamphyri, and of course the comic book version gets it right. And make no mistake: Lumley's Wamphyri are no sissy, romanticized vampires."

The second ***Necroscope*** series also features a new artist, *Dave Kendall*. "Brian encouraged Dave to send his artwork to us, and as soon as we saw it, we were floored," editor *Roland Mann* said. "His work was of such high quality, we knew he'd be right for the job." *Bob Eggleton*, who supplied the covers for the original novels, will once again supply the covers for the comics. ***Necroscope Book II: Wamphyri #1***, a $2.95 comic, is scheduled for September release.

COMIC SHOP NEWS
©1993 Comic Shop News All Rights Reserved
Editorial Office:
2339 Milstead Circle
Marietta, GA 30066
fax (404) 973-6949
Business Office:
931 Forest Park Lane
Suwanee, GA 30174
(404) 339-7446
Editors
Cliff Biggers
& Ward Batty
Publisher
Comic Shop News, Inc.
Flexographic Printing by
SULLIVAN

Meet The Scarab

The Scarab, the star of Vertigo's newest ongoing series, is a golden Age hero whose glory days came and went some fifty years ago. If you don't remember him, though, don't fret: no one's met him yet... but they will in early October.

The Scarab stars a Golden Age superhero created just for this series; writer *John Smith* and artist *Scot Eaton* have created the backstory for this hero who abandoned his costumed role many years previous. When Louis Sendak's wife, Eleanor, was trapped in a mystical realm called the Labyrinth, the allure of his mystical amulet and his superhero guise seemed meaningless. When this seventy-eight year old man learns that it is possible to enter the Labyrinth and return, though, he gains a new purpose in life and sets out to save his wife and rediscover his mystical heritage.

The Scarab #1, a $1.95 comic with a metallic-ink cover enhancement, is scheduled for October 7th release.

A Hard-Hitting Guy

Why has Guy Gardner become such a brutal hero? That's a question that's troubling the Justice League, who can't understand why Guy seemingly killed a villain in cold blood. There's an obvious answer: the guy they think is Guy isn't our Guy at all, so the real Guy will have to confront the guy who has taken his guise and unveil the disguise. Got it? Well, you will beginning on October 21st, when the Justice League begins investigating the problem in ***Justice League of America #83*** by *Vado, West,* and *Burchett*; the story wraps up in grand superhero style in ***Guy Gardner #15***, a November 4th release, courtesy of *Dixon, Staton,* and *Beatty*.

JURASSIC PARK

SkyCaps™

FROM SKYBOX

JURASSIC PARK SKYCAPS FROM SKYBOX

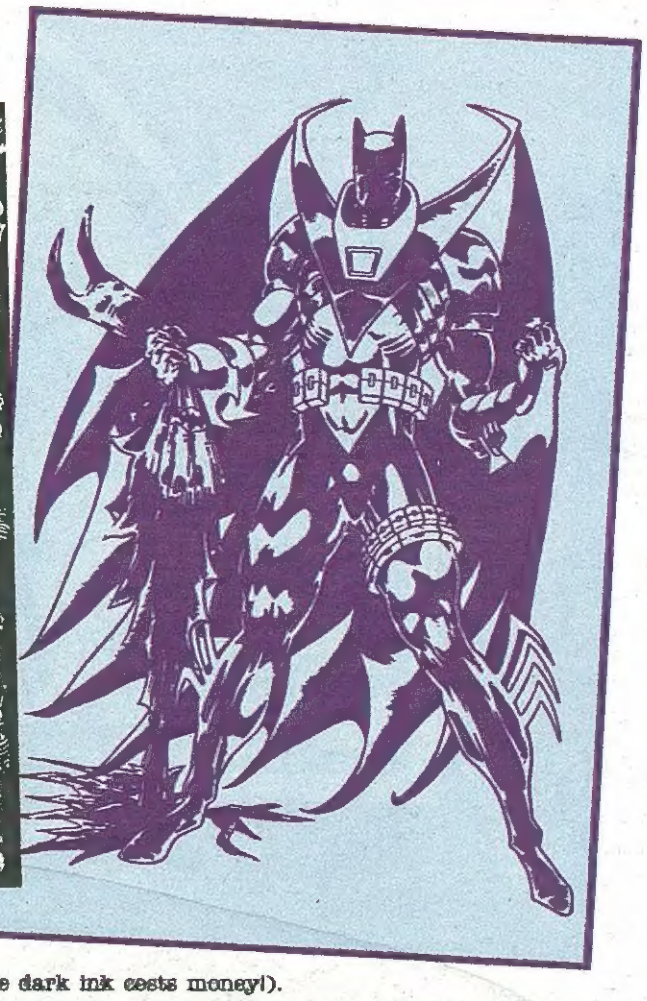
- The only series of collectible milk caps featuring exclusive on-set photography and artwork from ***Jurassic Park***–the most popular film of 1993 and already one of the top motion pictures of all time!
- 54 UV-coated ***Jurassic Park*** SkyCaps featuring characters, scenes, dinosaurs, and special effects from this spectacular movie.
- 6 randomly inserted bonus SkyCaps featuring model-imaging holograms of six dinosaurs.
- One double-sided, foil-enhanced ***Jurassic Park*** SkyCap Slammer randomly inserted.
- Each pack contains a full SkyCap checklist and game instructions.

Odds of finding bonus SkyCaps 1:9, ***Jurassic Park*** SkyCap Slammer 1:18. ***Jurassic Park*** SkyCap Slammer replaces two SkyCaps.

SkyBox INTERNATIONAL © 1993 Produced and distributed exclusively by SkyBox International. MCA UNIVERSAL MERCHANDISING TM & © 1993 Universal City Studios, Inc. and Amblin Entertainment, Inc.

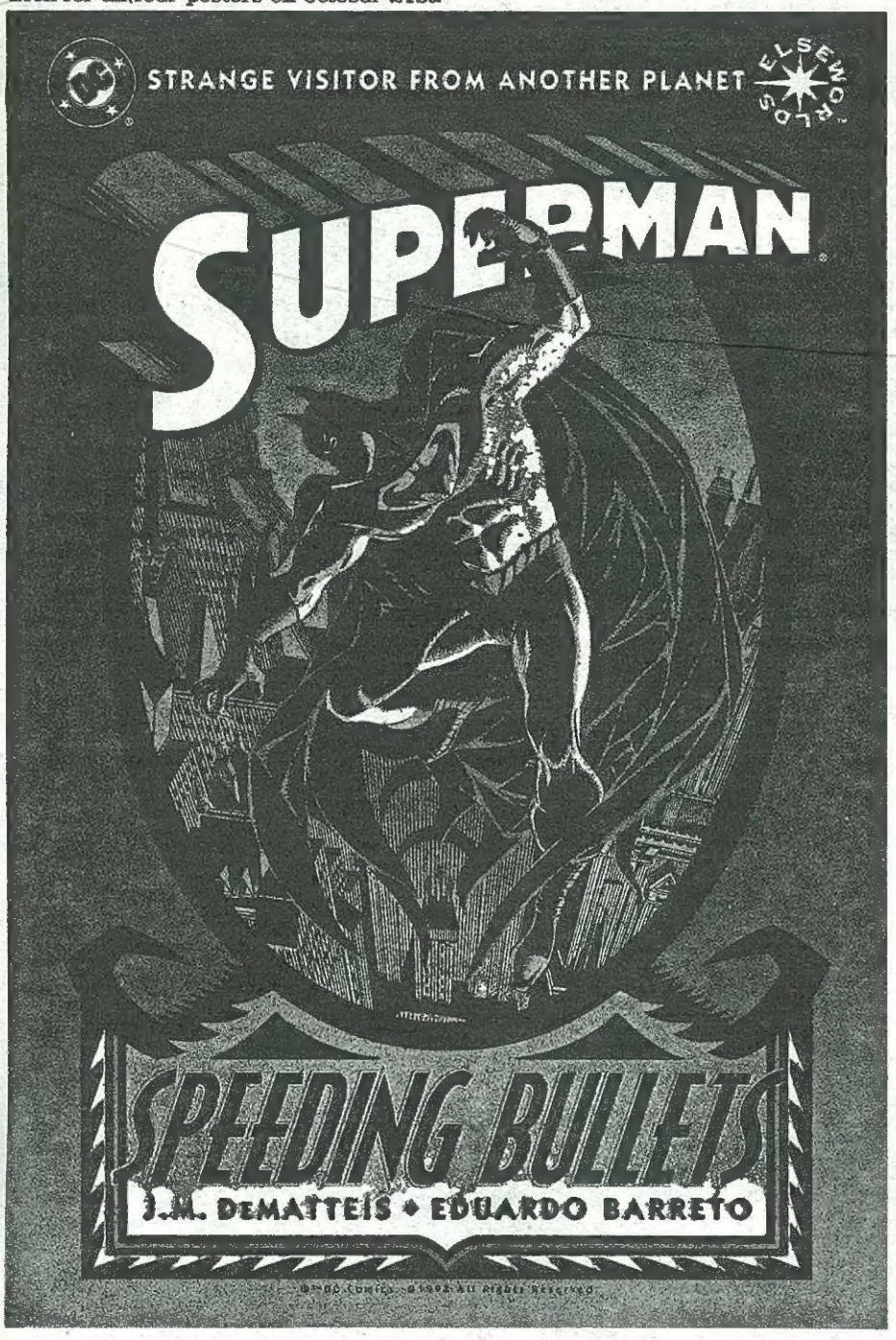
Dark *Angels*

Thanks to his superlative work on ***Sandman*** and other comics, *Neil Gaiman* has become one of the most popular authors in the field—but most comics fans are unaware that Gaiman has achieved some measure of success outside of the comics field as well. When he hasn't been busy writing comics, he's turned out an assortment of fantasy and science fiction tales for various magazines—most of them British, which is why American fans might not have seen them. ***Angels & Visitations: A Collection by Neil Gaiman*** gathers a dozen of those tales, along with eight poems, in a single volume, complemented by illustrations by *P. Craig Russell, Charles Vess, Bill Sienkiewicz,* and *Mike Zulli*. Even if you're lucky enough to have read the stories, you'll still most likely want a copy of this 160-page hardcover, because it features new introductions for each story. ***Angels & Visitations***, a hardcover release from Dream Haven Books, is scheduled for October release; if you're interested, be sure to let the friendly folks at your local comics shop know—and tell 'em that you heard about it in ***CSN***...



DC's Poster Line Is Really Smokin'

Obviously some people don't worry about the surgeon general's report on the dangers of tobacco smoke: Lobo keeps on smoking, which is evident in the appropriately-entitled ***Lobo: Smokin'!*** poster. Fully painted by *Joe DeVite* , this poster depicts Lobo once again risking death as he faces one of the most diabolical of all killers. Other posters scheduled for mid-October release include The ***New Batman***, illustrated by *Kelley Jones* and *Kevin Nowlan;* ***Swamp Thing***, painted by *Michael Zulli;* and the ***Glow-in-the-Dark Spectre***, illustrated by *Tom Mandrake*. The first three posters are priced at $4.95 each, while the glow-in-the-dark Spectre poster is priced a buck higher (hey, glow in the dark ink costs money!). Look for all four posters on October 21st.



DEFIANT
2
SEPTEMBER
$2.95
$3.75 CANADA
PLASM
Lapham
WITHERBY '93
ON SALE IN SEPTEMBER!

DAREDEVIL #323

TO STOP A SYMBIOTE!

Venom is trying to catch the "about face" virus and it's up to the new Daredevil and Siege to stop him before the virus makes himself unstoppable! Part 4 of "Fall From Grace" is brought to you by Dan Chichester, Scott McDaniel, and Hector Collazo with a beautifully painted cover by McDaniel and Pat Garrahy!

NOMAD #20

TROUBLE IS BREWING AS THE SIX PACK HITS THE SCENE

Cable's former buddies are hired to steal a NASA prototype. Their only problem is that Nomad has already stolen it! It's thief against thieves in this tale by Fabian Nicieza, Rick Mays, and Greg Adams. Look out for the gorgeous cover by S. Clarke Hawbaker.

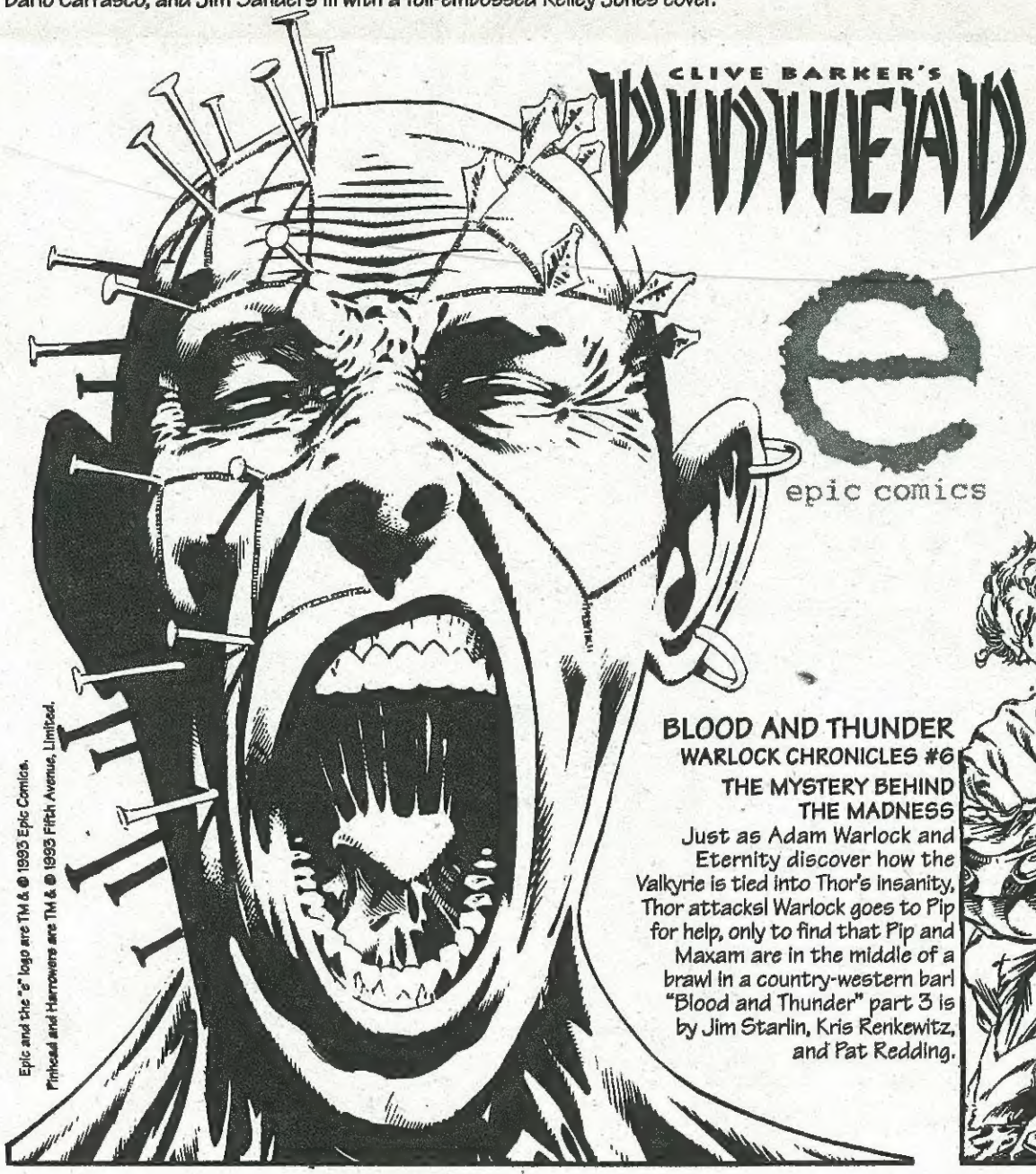
TM & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

MARVEL® COMICS

PINHEAD #1

MEET A BLAST FROM PINHEAD'S PAST

Pinhead's monthly misadventures begin here! Thrown back in time, Pinhead meets a similarly distempered ancestor, Arrowhead, in the Wild West. By D.G. Chichester, Dario Carrasco, and Jim Sanders III with a foil-embossed Kelley Jones cover.



epic comics

Epic and the "e" logo are TM & © 1993 Epic Comics.
Pinhead and Harrowers are TM & © 1993 Fifth Avenue, Limited.

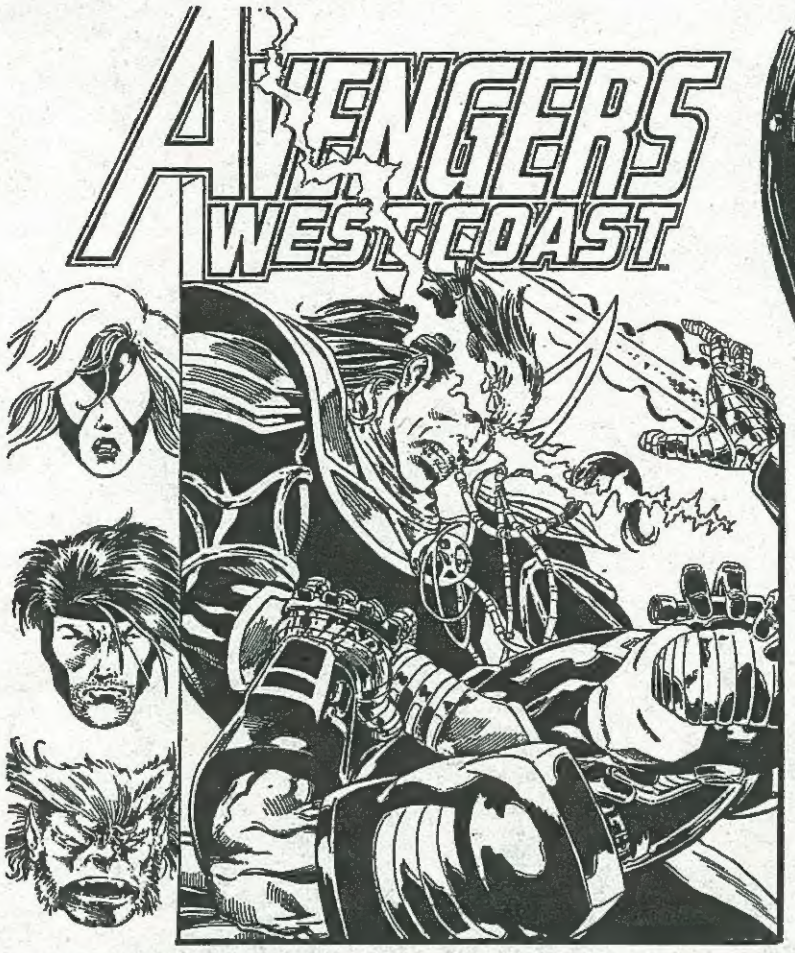
THE WARLOCK CHRONICLES

BLOOD AND THUNDER

WARLOCK CHRONICLES #6

THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE MADNESS

Just as Adam Warlock and Eternity discover how the Valkyrie is tied into Thor's insanity, Thor attacks! Warlock goes to Pip for help, only to find that Pip and Maxam are in the middle of a brawl in a country-western bar! "Blood and Thunder" part 3 is by Jim Starlin, Kris Renkewitz, and Pat Redding.



BLOOD TIES
AVENGERS WEST COAST #101, UNCANNY X-MEN #307

GENOSHA IN JEOPARDY!

The Avengers West Coast join in the escalating battle in Genosha, trying to stop human and mutant factions from utterly destroying each other. Meanwhile, Exodus gives War Machine a taste of his full, unfettered fury! The X-Men storm the Genoshan capital! And the search for Crystal's and Quicksilver's daughter, Luna, continues! AVENGERS WEST COAST is by Roy Thomas, Dave Ross, and Tim Dzon. UNCANNY X-MEN is by Scott Lobdell, John Romita, Jr., and Dan Green.

HARROWERS #1

TAKING THE ABYSS BY STORM!

Six humans are given mystical powers by an ancient goddess and sent to save innocent souls from the malevolent Leviathan. But at what cost to their own? Code-approved action monthly by Malcolm Smith, Zinc Ink, Gene Colan, and Joe Rubinstein. Featuring a glow-in-the-dark cover.

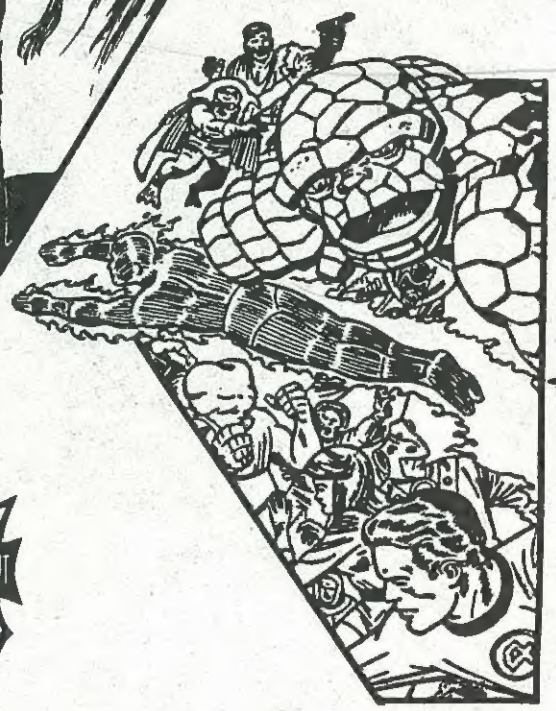
Pinhead and Harrowers are TM & © 1995 Fifth Avenue, Limited.

MIGHTY MARVEL FAN PHONE (516)352-1212
IT'S THE COST OF A REGULAR CALL FROM ANYWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES AND WON'T EXCEED 35 CENTS.

GHOST RIDER AND THE MIDNIGHT SONS MAGAZINE

INSIDE THE DARK SIDE OF MARVEL

Get all the dirt (and ectoplasmic ooze) on the changes occurring in the Midnight Sons books! There'll be profiles of all the creepy creators of your favorite supernatural books. You'll also get the scoop on the addition of DR. STRANGE to the Midnight Sons line. The Midnight Sons are going to change forever and you can have a sneak peek before it happens! 48 pages with a fabulous George Pratt cover!



MARVEL MASTERWORKS #25

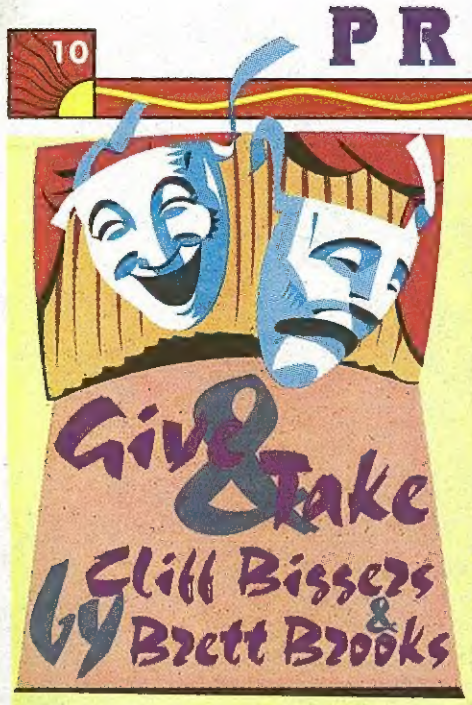
THE WORLD'S GREATEST REPRINT MAGAZINE!

Reprinting FANTASTIC FOUR #41-50 and FF ANNUAL #3, some of the Fantastic Four's most fabulous free-for-alls ever! Meet the Inhumans! See Reed and Sue say their wedding vows! Thrill to the FF's battles with the Frightful Four! And join the FF as they meet those ever-so-minor characters, the Silver Surfer and Galactus, for the first time. The whole shebang is wrapped up in a gorgeous handcover!

MONSTER MENACE #1 OF 4

FREAKY FOLLIES FROM THE FABULOUS '50'S!

Classic monster tales from the years before Marvel was Marvel! Relive classic moments like "Monster on Bald Mountain", "Channel X", and "Tim Boo Baa". These gems are brought to you in their entirety as originally written and drawn by the Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and Steve Ditko! Featuring a brand new cataclysmic Kyle Baker cover!



Each month, Cliff Biggers (in plain type) and Brett Brooks (*in italic type*) take a look at a few choice comics scheduled for release in the next few weeks. Publishers interested in having their books considered for review in this feature should send copies to ***CSN Give & Take, 2339 Milstead Circle, Marietta GA 30066.*** We'd prefer receiving copies of the books at least thirty days before they're scheduled to reach comic shops. Enough business—let's talk comics!

Comics readers often speak of the legends in the industry, the old masters who helped shape the Golden Age and/or the Silver Age; it's surprising, therefore, that there isn't more of a demand for the work of some of those selfsame legends who are still very active in the field. One example is Curt Swan, a masterful artist whose Superman was the definitive depiction of the hero for over two decades; alas, Swan is offered books all too rarely today, in spite of the fact that he's still better than 90% of the "hot artists" working in the field. Another example is Gene Colan, one of the second wave of talents (after Lee and Ditko) who helped shape the Marvel Silver Age; after decades of creating dynamic visuals for a variety of books, Colan's work has been rarely seen in the past few years outside of an Archie story or two.

Well, Curt Swan is still lamentably absent from the new comic racks—but I'm pleased to report that Gene Colan is back, and the work he's doing for Marvel's new Clive Barker book ***The Harrowers*** is some of his best in more than a decade.

The Harrowers
THAT DOES IT! I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOUR FOOLIN' AROUND!
MORTE MAMME SAID THIS IS MY MISSION— SO ALL OF YOU, OUTTA HERE!
WHAT ABOUT 'ALL FOR ONE?'
CHANGED MY MIND! NOW GET OUT!
PERFECT TIME TO SLIP AWAY INVISIBLY-- TAKE CARE OF MY OWN AGENDA...
GO ON, EVERY ONE OF YOU! I'LL USE THIS IF I HAVE TO!
FEELS STRANGE. I'M SO AFRAID OF WHAT I MIGHT FIND--
OH MAN! WHAT THE--
--YET I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
CHOMP
CHOMP
NO! NOOOOO!

The Harrowers, for those of you who haven't kept up with the various Clive Barker books, is not a part of the Razorline "Barkerverse." Instead, it spins off from the Epic ***Hellraiser*** line; the characters who comprise this motley crew were originally introduced in ***Hellraiser*** months ago, and are just now graduating to their own series. The Harrowers, who are agents of an ancient goddess named Morte Mamme, oppose the Cenobites; these characters, who have been recreated by Morte Mamme and are endowed with powers that make them particularly suitable adversaries for the Cenobites, have as their ultimate goal the irrevocable destruction of Leviathan, the force responsible for the Cenobites. The Harrowers' powers aren't typical superhero fare; for example, the bodily fluids (saliva, sweat... use your imagination here) of one Harrower are like acid to the Cenobites. Another has the ability to rejuvenate himself almost immediately—and, in a strange juxtaposition to that ability, he also seems to enjoy pain.

Just as ***The Hellbound Heart*** (the Clive Barker story that inspired ***Hellraiser)*** questions the ultimate boundaries between pleasure and pain, theorizing that in some cases any experience can be viewed as pleasurable to one sufficiently jaded, so The Harrowers questions the ultimate boundaries of superheroics. The powers that these characters possess make the Doom Patrol seem positively normal; even when you see that they fight for good, you still find yourself disturbed—and perhaps even repulsed—by the abilities that make them such appropriate heroes.

It isn't just the powers that these people possess that borders on repulsive, but rather the people themselves. This is a group of people that I don't think anyone would like to call their best friends—not even the other members of the group. They are all, in their own way, repulsed by most of the members of their gathering—but, thanks to Morte Mamme, they are being forced to live together. These people take the idea of a superhero to a completely different area; I hesitate to call them superheroes even, because their work is only borderline heroic, and they almost seem more fit to be called fantasy adventurers, or something along that line.

That's true; the story has a strangely dreamlike, disjointed feel, far more fantastic in nature than what most Barker fans might expect. It is, however, very much in keeping with the fantastic tone of Barker's more recent novels.

The story in the first issue, which is written by Zinc Ink, does little more than introduce the Harrowers and set up their first major confrontation with the Cenobites—in particular Pinhead. (Is this an appropriate time to mention that I find it vaguely disturbing that I don't really know who the writers of the book are? Just as I'd rather see artists' names rather than a blanket studio credit, so I'd rather know who worked on the story rather than see it credited to an amalgam like "Zinc Inc.")

(I concur.)

(Now, back to the review...) It's a surreal, disorienting tale, capturing the mood of some of Ditko's best supernatural material of the 1960's. And if surrealism and disorientation is your goal, there's no artist who can illustrate it more impressively than Colan; his work simply flows across the page.

Ultimately, I suspect that Barker fans will find ***The Harrowers*** more satisfying than ***Hellraiser,*** which has had trouble breaking itself free from some rather set story formulas. And I certainly know that comic fans with fond memories of Colan's work on ***Tomb of Dracula*** are going to really appreciate his work here.

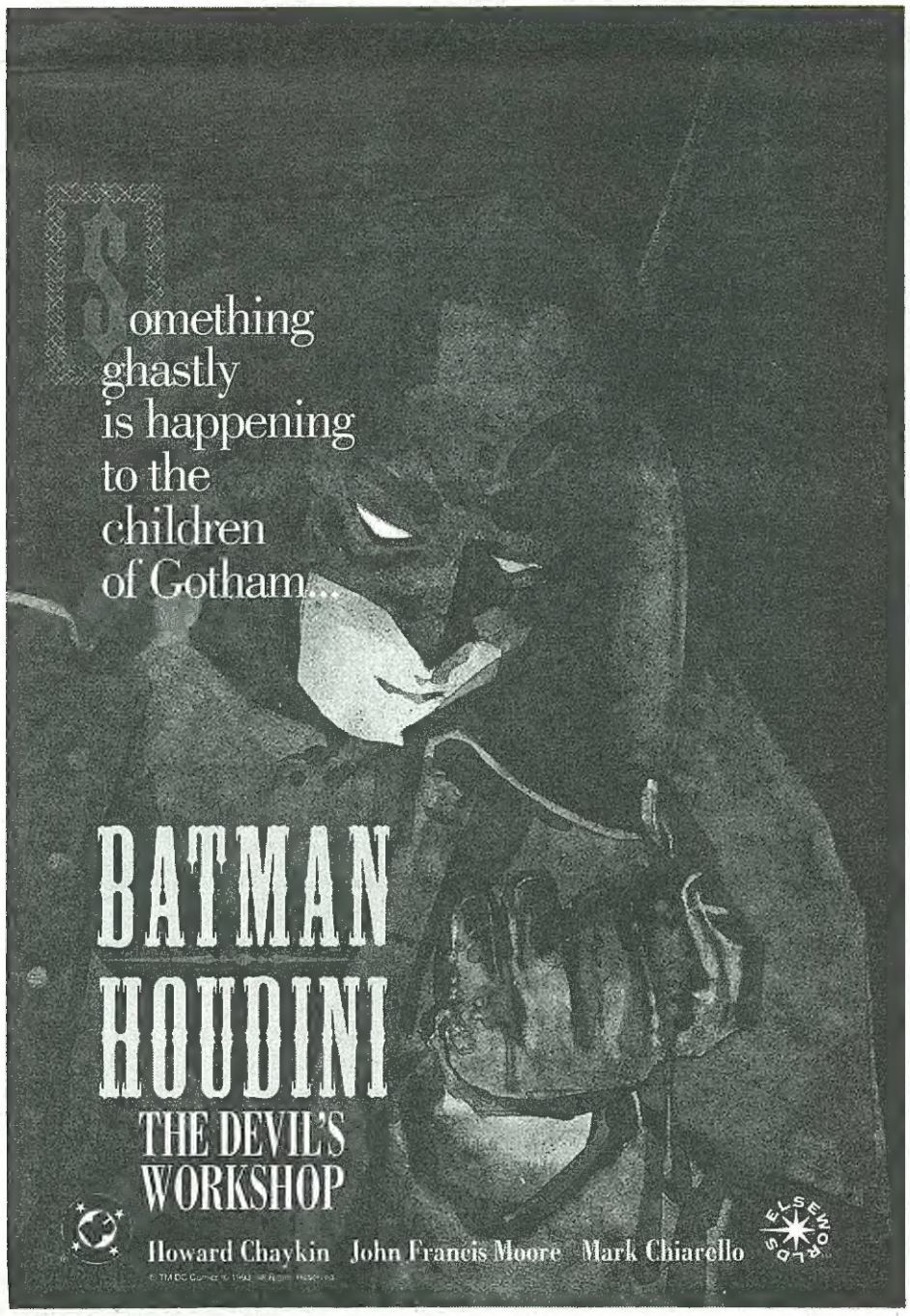
Some things just seem like a given.

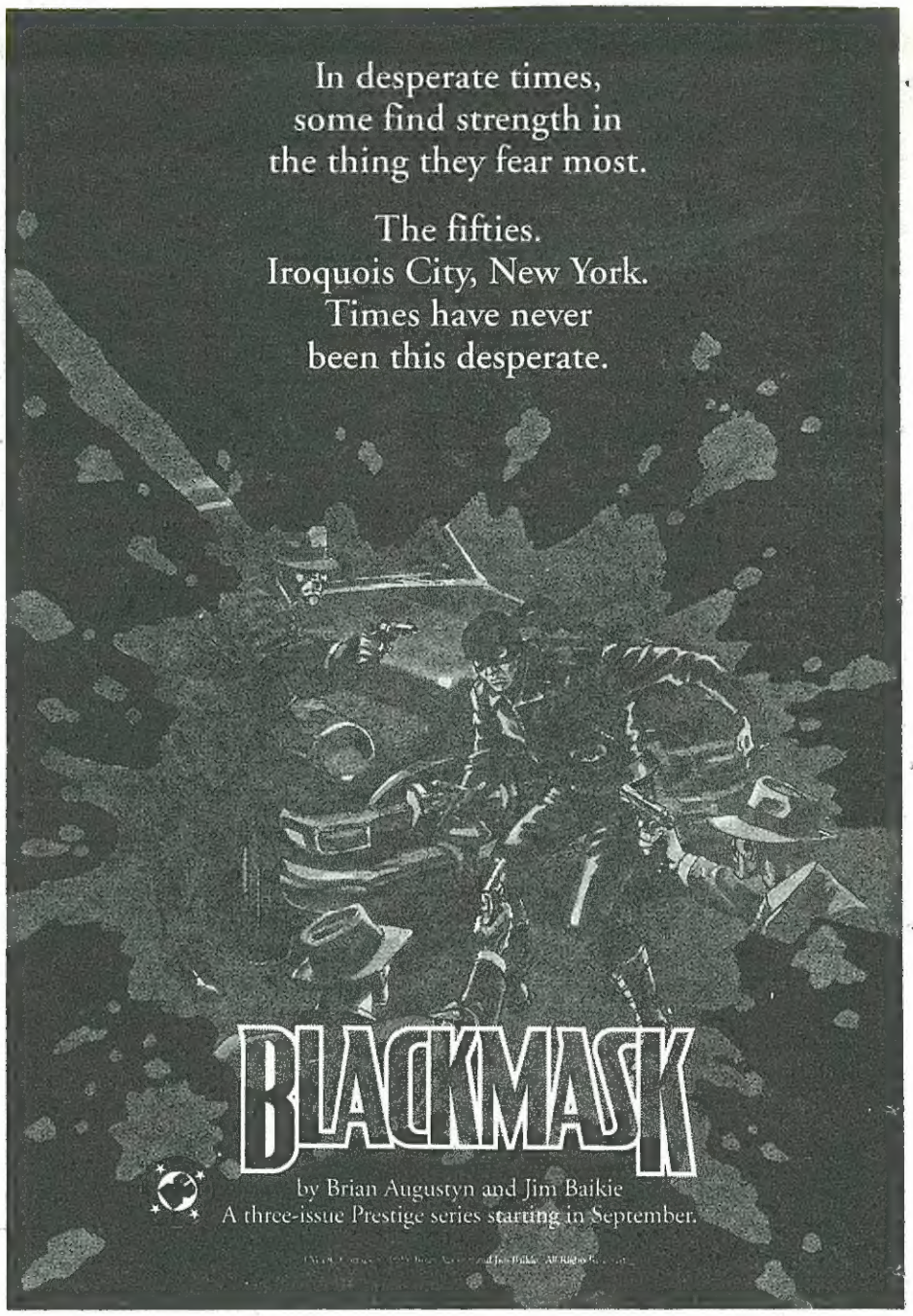
You know from very early on that something will either be successful, or it will bomb—of course, that doesn't say anything about the quality of the work. It seemed natural for Gambit—debatably the most popular member of the X-Men—to get his own series, and it seemed obvious that the series would be popular—but it still left unanswered the question whether or not it would be any good.

*The **Gambit** mini-series is written by Howard Mackie, with art by the team of Lee Weeks and Klaus Janson; if that doesn't lay your fears to rest, let me assure you now: **Gambit** is good. I have to admit that I had a conflicting set of prejudices going into this book, because I love Lee Weeks art, but I never really cared too much for Gambit as a character. Well, surprisingly, it wasn't my love of Lee Weeks' artistic abilities that won me over on this book—though that was exceptional—but rather the ideas and concepts presented that seemed to bring out the character of Gambit. Hey, I'm as open-minded as the next guy.*

Previously, I had dismissed Gambit as a snazzy costume, a nice coat, and a mediocre gimmick; he never had enough of a personality to really stand out in my mind. That's what Howard Mackie seems determined to add with this story; a personality rather than an accent and a stereotype.

The story, as it always seems to with




In desperate times, some find strength in the thing they fear most.
The fifties.
Iroquois City, New York.
Times have never been this desperate.
BLACKMASK
by Brian Augustyn and Jim Baikie
A three-issue Prestige series starting in September.

Batman Legends of the Dark Knight Halloween Special
...CRANE...
PROFESSOR CRANE ISSSN'T HEAR RIGHT NOW.
BUT, IF YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT--?

Gambit, revolves around the city of New Orleans. An ancient legend who goes by the name of The Tithe Collector has returned to the city, as he does every seven years, to gather his tithings and bestow a gift. The only question that leaves open is what is he collecting, what is he giving away, and who are the people involved? Well, if there wasn't any mystery, then the story would be over before it began. Mackie does a good job of bringing the mysticism that is generally associated with New Orleans to the forefront of this story, but he does a better job of bring the mystery of Gambit to the forefront. Gambit is a mystery character. We don't know that much about him, and in many ways that seems fine, but when the story uncovers things about his past and his present that were never before known, then it gets your attention.

Gambit's personality seems more suited to a solo series than to a team book; just as Wolverine functioned best away from a team, so does Gambit. That's about the only thing that the two characters have in common, though. That's good, too; I'd rather have two interesting characters than two derivations of the same character. His personality is almost charismatic in this series; he grabs the reader's attention almost immediately and never lets go.

Speaking of getting your attention—clever segue, that—lets talk about Lee Weeks. Lee Weeks first got my attention a few years ago when he did some work on ***Daredevil****. He's done a few things here and there since then, all of them good, but I'm glad to say that he looks great on* ***Gambit****. Gambit is the type of character that seems to suit Weeks' talents: the dark mood, the overcoat, the dynamic jumping, hey, it's perfect. Weeks has long deserved fan-fave status, and hopefully this book will give it to him.*

If his work in this book is any indication of what Weeks is currently capable of, then fan-fave status seems almost guaranteed. In a time when too many mutant artists seem determined to try to imitate Jim Lee, it's nice to see someone who has developed his own very dynamic style.

I don't think that the ***Gambit*** *mini-series is going to answer all of the questions that everyone has been asking about the Cajun Mutant. In fact, I would be willing to bet that it leaves a lot more questions behind than it does answers. What's more, I think I like it that way...*

One of the most pleasant aspects of ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*** is that it gives writers and artists a chance to reintroduce—for the first time, if that makes any sense—some of Batman's classic villains. ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight Halloween Special #1*** takes readers back to one of Batman's earliest confrontations with the Scarecrow—an appropriate Halloween villain, don't you think?

Jeph Loeb's story is taut and straightforward; he isn't so much rebuilding The Scarecrow from the ground up as he is simply modifying the design a bit. His Scarecrow serves as both a comparison and a contrast to the Batman. He, too, strikes fear into the heart of his adversaries—but he does it with a chemical concoction, not a frightening visage. He, too, uses a winged creature as his symbol in this tale—but it's the crow, not the bat, that represents the Scarecrow.

Loeb blends his Scarecrow story with a romantic tale of Bruce Wayne's involvement with an attractive and aggressive woman named Jillian Maxwell; if there's any problem with this storyline, it's that Bruce Wayne seems to become attracted to Jillian a bit too quickly—readers scarcely meet her in this book before she becomes a romantic lead. Loeb's handling of Alfred, in contrast, is as most satisfying; I'm quite pleased that Alfred has become more clever and less fawning in recent years, as it adds an entertaining edge to the relationship.

I didn't have the problem that you seemed to have with Bruce Wayne's and Jillian Maxwell's relationship. It is obviously contrived—but what aspect of a comic book story isn't?

That's too easy an out; many writers spend more time developing a character and a relationship. I'm aware that Loeb was limited to this single one-shot story, but even so, I see it as the only rushed element of the story.

The character of Jillian Maxwell is perfectly entertaining, and keeps suspicion

up through the story; she also, as you sort of pointed out, makes an excellent foil to Alfred, in fact, it is her relationship with him that I find more entertaining than the Bruce Wayne aspect.

I told you how much I liked Tim Sale's work in "Masks" last year; I like his work here just as much. ***Legends of the Dark Knight*** offers readers a number of boldly different interpretations of Batman; I find the bold high-contrast approach that Sale uses quite pleasing and more than a little reminiscent of Matt Wagner's Batman work.

I remember a time that I didn't care for Tim Sale's artwork. He used to have a problem making characters look the same from issue to issue, even though he has always had an excellent storytelling ability. Those days are long gone now though, because I find Sale's work some of the best in the business today.

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight Halloween Special #1 also serves one additional purpose: it gives us yet another Bruce Wayne Batman adventure to enjoy during the current Azrael-Batman storyline—and for those of us who'll never truly accept anyone else as Batman, that's quite a plus in itself. (By the way, how long has it been since I used ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*** as a stepping-stone to point out how the same sort of thing could be done for the Barry Allen Flash?...)

Not long enough, Cliff. Not long enough...

It is time for us to shift gears slightly, and talk about something that is a time honored tradition: the fable. In many ways, comics are related to fables, but the fable is it's own art form. While many times comics have adapted fables—some quite successfully— the fable still stands as a ancient form of story that deserves our respect and admiration. Unless you're Doug Wheeler, that is...

Classics Desecrated *is a new anthology that gathers together some of man's greatest and best loved fables in one volume—with a twist. Wheeler, who adapts all of the tales, has turned them inside out, and sometimes sideways, to retell the fable for a more modern audience. Generally, what that means is that he makes sure that the most hideous and perverted meaning of the fable gets brought out in the open—and he does it very well.*

Wheeler has tapped into a wellspring of entertainment with ***Classics Desecrated****. The idea of doing a parody of a classic story is hardly new, but Wheeler is able to do it cleanly and concisely, creating something that takes only seconds to read, but provides far more lasting entertainment. My favorite take was his version of Aesop's classic "The Fox and The Swallow," but in this version the moral ends up being the very important message, "Do not stand directly beneath falling two ton animals." Trust me, it's best just to read the whole thing—and I do mean the whole thing, because every story is excellent.*

The aspect of Wheeler's satire that I enjoyed the most was the broad appeal of his humor. This isn't a comic that's only funny to comic book fans—which is the problem with far too many "funny comics" today. Wheeler's humor is reminiscent of some of ***National Lampoon***'s humor in its glory days—without the risqué elements, of course. He's also enticed quite an impressive array of artists to try their hand at his whimsical fables-oofs.

True, the list of artists that Wheeler has collaborated with on this project is certainly impressive: P. Craig Russell, Kelley Jones, Charles Vess, Joe Staton, Matt Howarth, Phil Foglio, Thomas Yeates, Gray Morrow, and many others. What this means is that all of the stories look as good as they read.

If you're not a fan of parody books, I still urge you to try ***Classics Desecrated****. If for no other reason than to keep things like this coming out, and by that I mean twisted humor that relies on your brain more than someone else's guts. And let's face it, humor starts in the head, not the stomach.*

And let's hope it's a trend; I'd love to see more humor books like this and far fewer predictable spoofs of last month's ***Superman, Plasm,*** or ***Punisher.***

There's a new Shadow series coming out in October. The bad news is that Mike Kaluta didn't draw it. The good news is that Mike Kaluta didn't draw it.

Hold on! Before you throw ***CSN*** away in disgust for such a statement of blasphemy insofar as the Shadow is concerned, let me explain. It's not that Kaluta's Shadow isn't good—I rank it as the best Shadow ever done in comics form thus far. At the same time, I'm glad that Kaluta didn't have time to draw this series, because it gave me the opportunity to enjoy the incredible job that Gary Gianni did with this series. No artist other than Kaluta has ever evoked the visual feel of the 1930's more convincingly than Gianni; his incredibly detailed

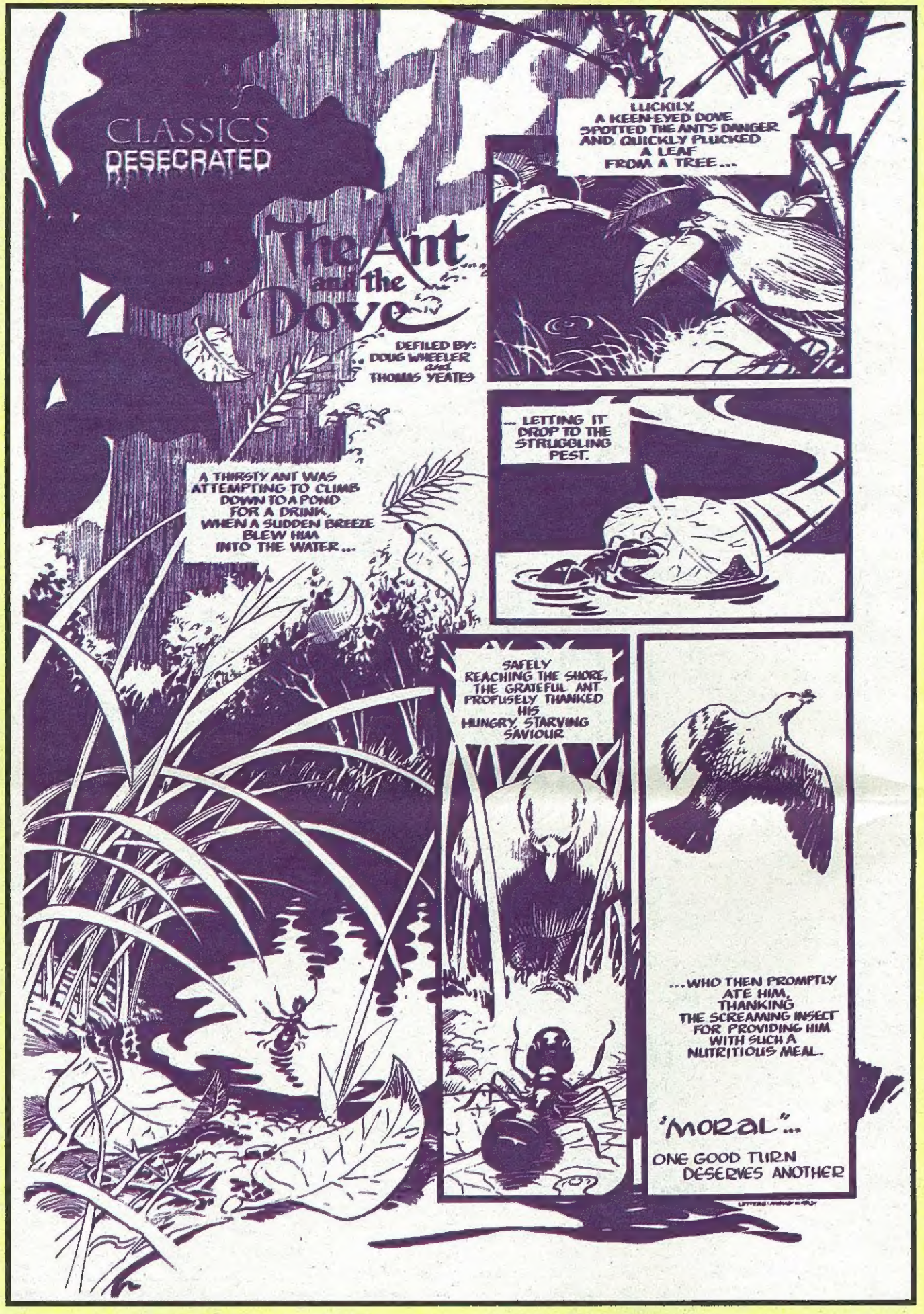
THE PEOPLE AROUND ME ARE PRESSING CLOSER, BUT ALL WE CAN SEE THROUGH THE HEAVY SMOKE AND FLAME ARE SOME OF THE WATER TAXIS MOVING OUT, WAITING TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO PICK UP ANY SURVIVORS...
The Shadow

linework, reminiscent at times of Reed Crandall and Roy G. Krenkel, virtually oozes the thirties. At the same time, Gianni isn't trying to do a pastiche here; he's drawing in a style uniquely his own—although I suspect that his reference shelf must be sagging under the load, if the accuracy of his illustration is any indication.

Michael W. Kaluta is still involved in this series, though—as the writer, along with Joel Goss. His story serves as a great vehicle for the Shadow—and that's a problem for many writers, who try to plug the Shadow into adventures far more suited for a hero like Doc Savage or Batman. Not every story is a Shadow story; Kaluta seems to know very well what works and what doesn't.

That's the main problem that I've had with many of the Shadow books that have been doe in the recent past: they weren't Shadow books. Some of them were good, and excellent even, but they just didn't have the right feel to make me think that this was the Shadow. I guess one of the problems is that the stories have dealt far too much with the Shadow himself, as opposed to letting him stay in the background and appear mysteriously whenever needed. Just looking through this new series, it is amazing the number of times I caught myself wondering if the figure in the background was, in fact, The Shadow. You've got to leave the mystery, or the Shadow gets into the light, and theat can prove destructive. By the way, I liked Gianni's stuff, too... but I still wish that Kaluta had drawn it.

Well, at least Kaluta contributes a really nifty cover painting—let's hope that Dark Horse decided to publish it as a poster in the near future. Let's also hope that ***The Shadow: In the Coils of the Leviathan*** meets with the success that it deserves... the Shadow has rarely been treated any better.


CLASSICS DESECRATED
The Ant and the Dove
DEFILED BY: DOUG WHEELER and THOMAS YEATES
A THIRSTY ANT WAS ATTEMPTING TO CLIMB DOWN TO A POND FOR A DRINK, WHEN A SUDDEN BREEZE BLEW HIM INTO THE WATER...
LUCKILY A KEEN-EYED DOVE SPOTTED THE ANT'S DANGER AND QUICKLY PLUCKED A LEAF FROM A TREE...
... LETTING IT DROP TO THE STRUGGLING PEST.
SAFELY REACHING THE SHORE, THE GRATEFUL ANT PROFUSELY THANKED HIS HUNGRY, STARVING SAVIOUR
...WHO THEN PROMPTLY ATE HIM, THANKING THE SCREAMING INSECT FOR PROVIDING HIM WITH SUCH A NUTRITIOUS MEAL.
'MORAL"...
ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER

*The Golden Age of Vertigo. That's kind of the way that I like to think of the new **Scarab** book that is about to ship as part of DC's Vertigo imprint. **Scarab** is a book that tells the story of one of the Golden Age's greatest heroes—Scarab—and why no one remembers him.*

The story is set in modern times. Louis Sendak, the man who is Scarab, is now 78 years old, retired, and trying to live out the rest of his life in peace on Staten Island. He's not having much luck. Years ago, when he was Scarab full-time, Sendak lost his wife to his house, and the labyrinth that dwells within. I suppose that I should mention a couple of things about Sendak's life. Like the fact that his father was some form of extra-dimensional explorer who returned to Earth with a wealth of items that he obtained in his travels. One of these things was a door that no one could open. Another was a strange scarab like object. Sendak found out what the scarab was the hard way, when it grafted onto his body while he was playing with it. Sendak's wife found out where the door went the hard way, too, when it opened up and pulled her inside. Sendak tried to get the door open as Scarab, but he had no success. So, he retired, gave up being Scarab, and began to mourn the loss of his wife. Of course, that's only the beginning of the story...

I enjoy these "revisionist Golden Age" stories, but I certainly wonder if somewhere there won't be a continuity-addict frantically trying to work the Scarab into his comprehensive hero history. Anyone who worries too much about just where the Scarab fits into the DC Universe does himself and the book a disservice; this isn't an attempt to revise DC continuity, but a novel way of introducing a character with an already-complex backstory.

***Scarab** works because it is working on so many levels. This isn't a story about a failed hero, or a retired hero, or his lost love, or an extra-dimensional power, or anything like that—it's about all of those and more. **Scarab** brings the horror of being a hero into the world, especially if you're a hero that becomes something that isn't truly human. John Smith, the writer of **Scarab**, plays on the human psyche, and the images of loss and confusion that plague us everyday, only he takes them to a super-human level. Now, we get to wait and see what comes next.*

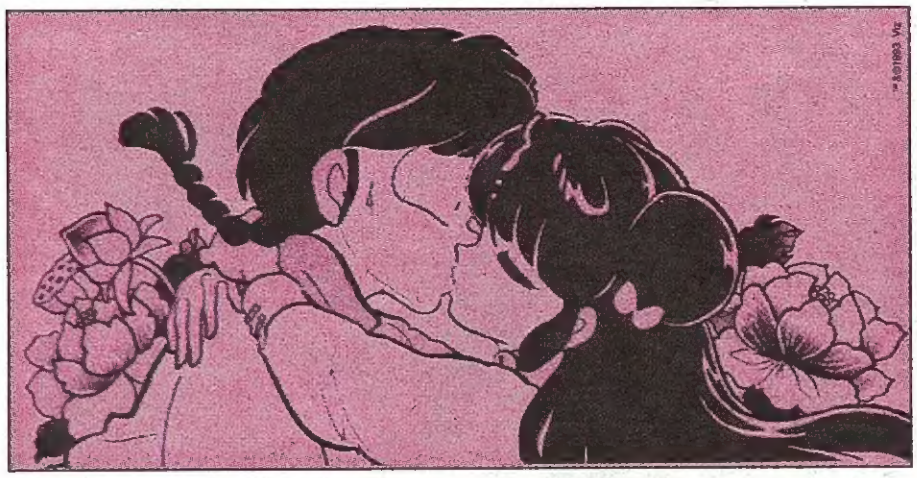
Whereas we have to live with our past mistakes, though, Louis Sendak gets to take action to correct his—and we can all vicariously enjoy his experience.

*The art on the book is by Scot Eaton and Mike Barreiro. Eaton is best known for his run on **Swamp Thing**, or at least was. The work that Eaton is putting into **Scarab** makes the stuff that he did for **Swamp Thing** looks like a warm-up exercise. Eaton lavishes each page with detail and richness that is so often overlooked in comics.*

***Scarab** is aimed at the right audience as a Vertigo title. While it is firmly set in the DC universe, it touches on those areas that aren't really discussed—or maybe are just kept hidden—from even the darkest of DC's mainline characters.*

Video: The Viz-ual Medium

Viz, the comic book company responsible for some of the best manga translations available in the American market, will soon expand into a new—albeit related—field: video. Late this year, Viz will release its first anime title, ***Mermaid's Scar,*** *Rumiko Takahashi*'s sequel to ***Mermaid Forest.*** "The works of Rumiko Takahashi have always been very popular among our readers," said editor *Satoru Fujii,* "and I don't think we could have chosen a better title to launch our new video line if we'd tried... We're very excited to be joining the ranks of the anime industry at last. This is something we've been wanting to do since we first began publishing manga in English eight years ago. With the way our company has been growing over the past year, at last the time finally seems to be right." Other future Viz Video releases include ***Ranma 1/2*** and ***Striker. CSN*** will update you on exact release dates and prices as soon as the information is confirmed.



The Coast Isn't Clear...

The real Superman may be back—but Coast City isn't so fortunate. As readers of the Reign of the Supermen know, the city was totally destroyed by the cyborg Superman... and you can imagine that Green Lantern is none too happy about that. In ***Green Lantern #48,*** Superman and the Justice League join Green Lantern as he surveys the extent of the damage... but even the combined might of these heroes isn't enough to rebuild the devastated city. There are problems elsewhere as well, however: on Oa, the Guardians of the Galaxy find themselves in combat with... the Guardians of the Galaxy! ***Green Lantern #48,*** an October 21st release, is produced by *Jones, Cobbs,* and *Tanghal.*

™ &©1993 DC Comics

Avengers Assembled

If you've tried to track down the early Marvel Masterworks hardcover reprinting the first ten issues of ***The Avengers,*** you've probably discovered that the reprint volume can be almost as hard to find as some of the issues it reprints. Marvel's trying to help relieve the frustration, though, with the release of ***Avengers Masterworks,*** a $12.95 trade paperback reprinting the first five issues of the Avengers from three decades ago. *Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Dick Ayers...* they're all here, along with such heroes as Iron Man, Thor, Ant Man, the Wasp, Captain America, and the Hulk. You can add a part of history to your collection on October 21st, for scarcely more per book than the cost of a modern comic!

AVENGERS
SEE THE NEW GIANT-MAN!
ARMED WITH A FANTASTIC POWER THE SPACE PHANTOM SETS OUT TO DESTROY THE EARTH'S MIGHTIEST SUPER-HEROES!
GIANT-MAN! THEORY LOOK OUT! IT ISN'T THE HULK... IT'S THE SPACE PHANTOM! HE'S ABOUT TO ATTACK IRON MAN!
ONE BY ONE THE SPACE PHANTOM VANQUISHES THE AVENGERS AND TAKES OVER THEIR BODIES HIMSELF! A MARVEL SENSATION!

™ &©1993 Marvel Comics

CSN CHARTS

TOP 50 COMICS

CSN's Top Seller charts are based on figures supplied by the two major distributors, Diamond Distribution and Capital City Distribution, as well as figures by a cross-section of comics speciality shops. The distributor's figures represent retailer orders placed on the titles, while the information from stores represents copies sold.

1. Batman 500 Collectors' Edition
2. Superman 82 Collectors Edition
3. Uncanny X-Men 304
4. Adventures of Superman 505 Collectors' Edition
5. X-Men 2099 1
6. Deathmate Blue
7. X-Force 25
8. Detective Comics 667
9. Plasm 1
10. Spawn 13
11. X-Men 24
12. Second Life of Dr. Mirage 1
13. Savage Dragon 3
14. X-Men Unlimited 2
15. Cyberforce 4
16. Superpatriot 1
17. Shadowhawk II 3
18. Deathblow 2
19. Union 1
20. Batman 500 (regular)
21. Superman 82 (regular)
22. Superman: Man of Steel 26
23. Justice League Task Force 5
24. Amazing Spider-Man 382
25. Action Comics 691
26. X-Force 26
27. Green Lantern 46
28. Bloodstrike 2
29. Batman: Shadow of the Bat 17
30. Sabretooth 2
31. Deadpool 3
32. Stormwatch 0
33. Maxx 4
34. Daredevil: Man Without Fear 1
35. Thunderstrike 1
36. Venom: Funeral Pyre 3
37. Wolverine 73
38. X-Factor 94
39. Wolverine/Punisher: Damaging Evidence
40. Spider-Man 2099 12
41. Catwoman 2
42. Adventures of Superman 505 (regular)
43. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter 5
44. Star Trek: Deep Space Nine 1
45. 2099 Unlimited 2
46. Secret Weapons 3
47. Ren & Stimpy 11
48. Infinity Crusade 5
49. Bloodshot 10
50. X-O Manowar 22

TOP DOLLAR COMICS

The following comics, graphic novels and trade paperbacks were given Top Dollar ratings based on the dollar volume of the copies sold (or are expected to sell) during the late August and September sales period.

1. Deathmate Blue
2. Batman 500 Collectors' Edition
3. Uncanny X-Men 304
4. Superman 82 Collectors' Edition
5. X-Force 25
6. Adventures of Superman 505 Collectors Edition
7. Plasm 1
8. X-Men Unlimited 2
9. Second Life of Dr. Mirage 1
10. X-Men 2099 1
11. Spawn 13
12. Shadowhawk II 3
13. Batman 500 (regular)
14. Savage Dragon 3
15. Daredevil: Man Without Fear 1
16. Thunderstrike 2
17. Cyberforce 4
18. Superpatriot 1
19. Union 1
20. Deathblow 2
21. Superman 82 (regular)
22. Sabretooth 2
23. Deadpool 3
24. Venom: funeral Pyre 3
25. Bloodstrike 2
25. Detective comics 667
27. Stormwatch 0
28. Maxx 4
29. Superman: Man of Steel 26
30. Bloodstrike
31. 2099 Unlimited 2
32. Wolverine/Punisher: Damaging Evidence 1
33. Batman: Shadow of the bat 17
34. Star Trek: Deep Space Nine 1
35. Wolverine 73
36. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter 5
37.Infinity Crusade 5
38. Justice League Task Force 5
39. Catwoman 2
40. Amazing Spider-Man 382
41. Action Comics 691
42. Shadowman 19
43. Secret weapons 3
44. X-Force 26
45. Green Lantern 46
46. Bloodshot 10
47. X-O Manowar 22
48. Ren & Stimpy 11
49. X-Factor 94
50. Harbinger 23

TOP 10 BLACK & WHITE COMICS

1. Cerebus 173
2. Dirty Pair: Sim Hell 4
3. Dark Horse Presents 77
4. Savage Sword of Conan 214
5. Conan Saga 78
6. Ranma 1/2 Part Two 8
7. Robotech: Return to Macross 5
8. Maison Ikkoku 3
9. Silent Mobius Part Four 1
10. Venus Wars II 15

©1993 Comic Shop News, Inc.

TOP TEN NON-COMICS

The Top Ten Non-Comics is based on number and not dollar value. This category includes graphic novels, hardcovers, trade paperbacks, portfolios, etc. It includes books that actually were on sale during the September sales period.

1. Return of Superman Trading Cards
2. Star Trek Masterpiece Trading Cards
3. Wizard 26
4. Hero Illustrated 3
5. Hero Illustrated 4
6. Hero Illustrated: Batman special
7. Comic Values Monthly 86
8. WildCATs Trading Cards
9. Michael Whelan Trading Cards
10. Crow TPB

MARVEL HOT PICKS

Harrowers™ & © 1993 Clive Barker

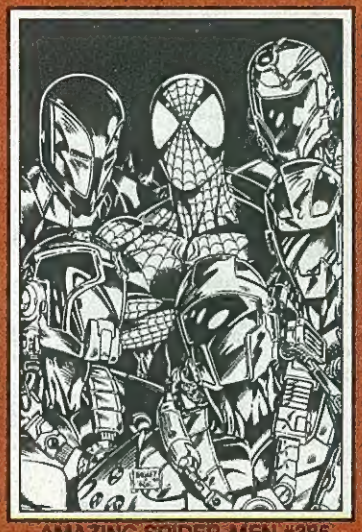
HARROWERS #2
Horror master Clive Barker brings you more excitement as the Harrowers try to escape from Pinhead and the Cenobites!

MARVELS #1
This 48-page, fully-painted masterpiece is the first of four issues showing the Marvel Universe through a spectator's eyes!

MARVEL X-MEN COLLECTION BY JIM LEE #1
On quality glossy stock, this beautiful 32-page book reprints fan-fave Jim Lee's art for the X-Men card series!

GHOST RIDER #45
A spot-varnished cover highlights chapter 10 of the "Seige of Darkness" crossover that will change the Midnight Sons forever!

NOVA #1
The super-dude with the bad attitude gets his own ongoing series in this 48-page issue sporting a gold foil cover!



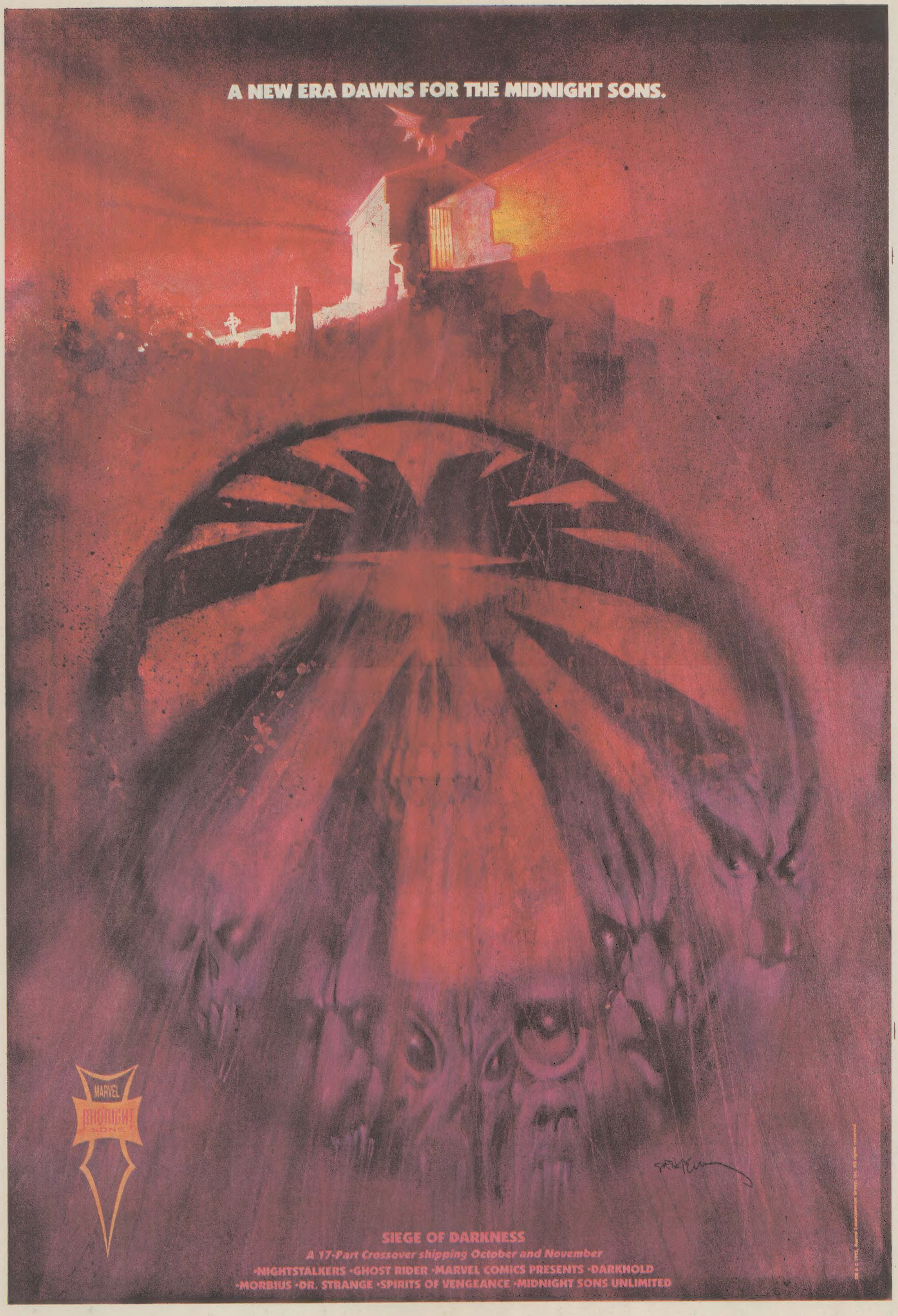
AMAZING SPIDER-MEN #385
Spidey join the Jury as they attempt to steal the ultimate Venom-killing machine! Also, more on the mystery concerning Peter's parents!

MARVEL® COMICS

MARVEL COMICS SHIPPING THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 9TH

™ & © 1993 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

Prophet TM & ©1993 Rob Liefeld APP


A NEW ERA DAWNS FOR THE MIDNIGHT SONS.
MARVEL
MIDNIGHT SONS
SIEGE OF DARKNESS
A 17-Part Crossover shipping October and November
•NIGHTSTALKERS •GHOST RIDER •MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS •DARKHOLD
•MORBIUS •DR. STRANGE •SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE •MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED